

Executive Order 11-00

Executive Order Creating The Governor's Montana Wolf Management Advisory Council

WHEREAS, wolves began to reoccupy northwestern Montana naturally in the 1980s, established a breeding population there in 1985, and continue to increase in numbers in this part of the state; and

WHEREAS, 66 wolves were reintroduced by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park in 1995 and 1996, and have established breeding populations in both these areas, as well as expanding their numbers from these areas into adjacent parts of Montana; and

WHEREAS, wolves are listed by the Secretary of the Interior (the Secretary) under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 as "endangered" in northwestern Montana and as "experimental, non-essential populations" in the remainder of the state; and

WHEREAS, biological recovery criteria established by the Secretary for removing wolves from the list of federally protected and managed species may be met within the next three to five years; and

WHEREAS, prior to delisting wolves, the Secretary established a requirement that the states of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have in place state management plans and other adequate regulatory mechanisms to ensure that the recovered wolf population will remain secure within the northern Rocky Mountain Recovery Area following delisting; and

WHEREAS, a previous management plan developed for wolves in Montana addressed only how wolves would be managed while listed under the Endangered Species Act, and was not adopted or implemented by the state because of uncertainty of federal funding for wolf management; and

WHEREAS, the Governors of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have found that recovery and delisting of wolves in the three states as soon as possible is in the best interest of the people of their respective states and agree that a regional approach to wolf management will be necessary; and

WHEREAS, wolves are having, and will continue to have, both positive and negative impacts on the economy and lives of Montana's citizens; and

WHEREAS, wolves, like all other wildlife species, will need to be managed to maintain an acceptable balance between the positive and negative impacts; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks is the state agency charged under state statute with the management of resident wildlife for the benefit of current and future generations of the people; and

WHEREAS, the people of Montana have a significant stake in the future management of wolves in the state and will benefit or suffer more directly than other citizens of the United States in response to wolf recovery and management and, accordingly, should be provided with an opportunity to advise the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on how wolves are managed after wolves are removed from the list of threatened and endangered species.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARC RACICOT, Governor of the State of Montana, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the laws and Constitution of the State of Montana, do hereby create the Governor's Montana State Wolf Management Advisory Council.

I. PURPOSE

The Montana State Wolf Management Advisory Council shall:

- A. advise the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding wolf management in Montana after this species is removed from the list of federally protected species. Specifically, the Council shall advise the agency on issues including, but not limited to:
 1. the means to ensure the wolf population in Montana remains above the level that would require reclassification as threatened or endangered under federal law;
 2. the impacts of wolves on livestock and agricultural operations and ways to mitigate these impacts;
 3. the impacts of wolves on natural prey populations and big game hunting and ways to mitigate those impacts;
 4. the impacts of wolves on other aspects of the economy and lifestyles of Montana's citizens and ways to address those impacts;
 5. appropriate roles for state and federal agencies, tribes and private groups in wolf management;
 6. appropriate funding sources including state, federal and private funds to be used in the management of wolves; and
 7. legislative or fiscal proposals that should be proposed to the 57th Montana Legislature or future legislative sessions.
- B. In its deliberations, the Council shall consider input from the citizens of the state and other interested parties, as well as the wolf management plans of the states of Idaho and Wyoming.

II. COMPOSITION

The Council shall consist of not more than 15 members appointed by the Governor. Members will represent a variety of interests including, but not limited to agriculture, hunting and wildlife conservation. The names and addresses of members, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, are submitted by separate letter to the Secretary of State and the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

III. COMPENSATION

Council members shall be reimbursed by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for reasonable travel expenses pursuant to sections 2-15-122(5) and 2-18-501 through 2-15-503, MCA.

IV. DURATION

The Council shall exist for a period of two years from the effective date of this Order unless extended by subsequent Executive Order.

This Order shall be effective immediately.

GIVEN under my hand and the GREAT
SEAL of the State of Montana,
this ____ day of _____, 2000.

MARC RACICOT, Governor

ATTEST:

MIKE COONEY, Secretary of State

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